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NEW DELHI

Hardline Sikhs are intimidating moderates in Indian communities abroad over the Punjab peace plan, the government said today.

Minister of State for External Affairs Khurshid Alam Khan told parliament the latest incident of intimidation was in Toronto on August 3 when a moderate member of the community was attacked and wounded by five men.

Khan did not give details but said the Indian High Commission had taken up the issue with the Canadian government.

"The attention of governments concerned has been pointedly drawn to the implications of such activities on the life within the Indian community," Khan added.

India has frequently expressed concern over the activities of Sikh extremists living in North America and Europe who support militants campaigning for a separate state in Punjab.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi last month signed a peace accord with moderate Sikh leader Harchand Singh Longowal aimed at ending the three-year separatist crisis. The accord has been condemned by militant Sikhs as a sellout.

Khan's statement came as Indian newspapers said the main suspect in last week's killing of government parliamentarian Lalit Maken was a Sikh wanted in connection with a plot to kill Gandhi in the United States.

The Hindustan Times said police strongly suspected that Lal Singh, sought by the FBI since it foiled a plot to kill Gandhi last May, was involved.

Police could not confirm or deny that they suspected Lal Singh. But a police spokesman told Reuters police had pieced together a description of one of Maken's killers from eyewitness accounts that was similar to Lal Singh.

Maken, who was shot down with his wife outside their Delhi home by two men armed with automatic weapons, was a well-known critic of Sikh extremists. Police have not ruled out the possibility that he was killed by extremists.

Khan told parliament last month Lal Singh was one of four Sikh extremists who trained at a mercenary school in Alabama.

Newspapers have also named Lal Singh as being sought by the Canadian police after the June 23 crash of an Air India jumbo jet which killed all 329 people on board.

Khan said in parliament last month India had protested to the U.S. Government over the training camps for mercenaries.

Answering questions in parliament today he said the government was not aware of any training schools for Sikh extremists in temples in Canada, or of any camps there backed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.